

Sends letter asking companies to disclose use of antibiotics in meat production

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee and the only microbiologist in Congress, [today sent a letter to over 60 fast food companies](#), producers, processors, and grocery chains asking them to disclose their policies on antibiotic use in meat and poultry production.

In addition to asking for company policy, Slaughter asked the restaurants to provide a breakdown of the percentages of beef, pork and poultry which they serve raised "without any antibiotics," raised with antibiotics only for "therapeutic reasons," or raised with "routine use of antibiotics."

"Very simply, consumers have a right to know what's in their food," said Slaughter. "It's like that old commercial, 'where's the beef?' We just want to know, 'what's in the beef?' The US is facing a growing public health crisis in the form of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and information about how these companies are contributing to its rise or resolution should be available to consumers."

Citing some alarming statistics, including that in 2011 the US had the most outbreaks ever of antibiotic-resistant Salmonella due to contaminated meat and poultry, the letter noted that "the practice of routinely feeding antibiotics to chickens, cows, and swine has been shown to harm human health by contributing to diseases that do not respond to treatment."

"There are some who would have us believe that we must pump our food up with antibiotics to keep prices low and affordable," said Slaughter. "But the food industry has proven success stories and leaders who understand the benefits that come from raising and serving antibiotic-free meat. It is not incompatible for us to have healthy and affordable food."

In 2010, the Food and Drug Administration released data revealing that in the United States 80 percent of all antibiotics are used in food-animals, not humans. Since then, and in conjunction with [a rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria](#), the practice of routinely feeding antibiotics has come

under scrutiny.

In December 2011, Slaughter hosted a briefing titled ["Keeping Antibiotics Working"](#) where farmers and successful businesses extolled the benefits of tapping into the growing domestic and international demand for antibiotic-free meat. The group urged congressional action to preserve antibiotics for the treatment of human diseases, an issue Slaughter has been working on for years.

Since 2007, Congresswoman Slaughter has been the author of legislation titled The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA), designed to ensure that we preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics for the treatment of human disease. The legislation would prevent agricultural overuse of seven classes of antibiotics important for human health.

[More information on PAMTA, including a list of the more than 300 organizations who have endorsed Slaughter's legislation is available here.](#)

[For a copy of the letter, click here.](#)

The full list of letter recipients is below.

A&W Restaurants

Applebees

Applegate Organic and Natural Meats

Arby's

Au Bon Pain

Bell & Evans

Blimpie

Bojangles' Famous Chicken 'n Biscuits

Bon Appétit Management Company

Burger King

Cargill, Incorporated

Carl's Jr.

Chick-Fil-A

Chipotle Mexican Grill

Coleman Natural Foods

Compass Group North America

Costco

Dean & DeLuca

Domino's Pizza LLC

Dunkin' Donuts

Five Guys Enterprises, LLC

Hardee's

Hormel Foods Corporation

In-N-Out Burger

Jack In the Box

Jennie-O Turkey Store

KFC

Kraft/Oscar Mayer

Kroger

McDonald's

Murray's Chicken

National Beef Packing Company, LLC

Niman Ranch

Ozark Mountain Pork

Panda Express

Panera

Perdue

Pilgrims Pride Corporation

Pizza Hut

Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits

Restaurant Associates

Roy Rogers Restaurants

Safeway

Sam's Club

Smithfield Foods, Inc.

Sonic Drive-In

Starbucks

Stop and Shop

Subway

Subway

sweetgreen

Taco Bell

Target

Tim Hortons

Trader Joe's

Tyson Foods, Inc.

Walmart

Wegmans

Wendy's

White Castle

Whole Foods

YUM!

Z Burger